

aperture of the tomb. The spirits of dead kings are thus consulted on matters of public concern as well as by private individuals touching their own affairs. If a war is to be waged, if a plague is raging among the people or a murrain among the cattle, if the land is parched with drought, in short, if any danger threatens or any calamity has afflicted the country, recourse is had to these local gods, dwelling each in his shady grove, not far from the abodes of the living. They are near, but the great god in heaven is far away. What wonder, therefore, that their help is often sought while he is neglected ? They are national heroes as well as gods ; their history is remembered ; men tell of the doughty deeds they did in their lifetime ; why should they not be able to succour their votaries now that they have put on immortality ? All over the country these temple-tombs may be seen. They serve as historical monuments to recall to the people the names of their former kings and the annals of their country. One of the most popular of the royal shrines is " near Senanga at the southern end of the great plain of the Barotsc. Voyagers who go down the Zambesi do not fail to pay their devotions at the shrine, that the god of the place may make their voyage to prosper and may guard the frail canoe from shipwreck in the rush and roar of the rapids ; and when they return in safety they repair again to the sacred spot to deposit a thank-offering for the protection of the deity.¹

The foregoing examples suffice to prove that the worship of dead chiefs and kings has been an important, perhaps we may even say, the most important element in the

religion ki»g« IMS
 of many African tribes. Regarded from the native
 point i^p"t"m
 of view nothing could be more natural. The king
 rules d^n^m |||
 over his people in life ; and since all these tribes the religion
 entertain of man>-
 a firm and unquestioning belief not only in the
 existence
 but in the power of the spirits of the dead, they
 necessarily
 conclude that of all the departed spirits none can
 be so
 potent for good or evil, none therefore need to be
 propi-
 tiated so earnestly by prayer and sacrifice, as the
 souls of
 dead kings. Thus while every family worships
 privately the

¹ Eugene Begum, *Les Ba-rot\$E_y* pp. 120-123. Compare
Totemism and
Exogamy iv. 306 sq.